

"THE IDIOT" ON M. O.

A Suppressed Chapter of "Coffee and Repartee" by J. K. Bangs.

Glorious Times Coming. When Each Passenger Will Be Paid For Riding on the Street Cars—Morris Chairs, Desks and Carnegie Libraries to Be Provided—The City to Pay the Bill.

"I see," said the idiot as he folded up the morning paper and sat on it so that his fellow boarders might not come into possession, "that the municipal marshmallow and peanut brittle plant at Hoboken has been sold to the candy trust, and the dream of comparatively free and absolutely pure marshmallows and peanut brittle under the control of the city fathers has turned out to be a mere bit of bankrupted idleness."

"It's all idleness—the whole municipal ownership scheme," said Mr. Brief, the lawyer. "It's a bubble without even the soap."

"Oh, I don't think that," said the idiot. "Seems to me it's a pretty good scheme, only they ought to make it comprehensive. What I want to see is the day when the municipality owns everything that now fills the individ-



EACH PASSENGER WILL BE PROVIDED WITH A MORRIS CHAIR.

nal with care, from the toothache and appendicitis up to the trolleys, theaters and philosophy. Did you ever think, Dr. Squills, of what a fine thing it would be to operate on the body politic for a case of municipal appendicitis?"

"I have never let my mind dwell upon so fertile a field for thought—no," said the doctor. "It would be rather difficult, wouldn't it?"

"I suppose it would," returned the idiot. "I suppose it would be next to impossible to etherize the whole city government before you began to grapple around in its insides after the offending vermiform, but if it could be done wouldn't it be fine? Just think of getting rid of all the useless and inflamed members of the body politic as easily as man now sheds his personally conducted trouble with his innards."

"Do you really believe that government could run the trolleys as well as they are run by individuals?" asked Mr. Brief.

"If they couldn't they'd better get out of business," said the idiot. "I don't see why they can't run street railways as well as they run the street manure-department. And think how nice it would be—how much envy, hatred and malice would disappear—if the people owned the trolley! For instance, when you and I see Mr. J. Williboy Duckington hiking up the pike in his automotrouble?"

"His what?" demanded the lawyer.

"His automotrouble," said the idiot.

"It's a machine run by gasoline that breeds trouble of its own power. When we see old Williboy scotching along in his car you and I turn pale pink with envy because we haven't anything of the kind to keep us awake nights and before the police courts of all the counties 'twixt Cattaraugus and Kennebunk. We're too poor to pay even for that long and tolerably consistent scent that lies in the trail of it, and we gnash our teeth to think that we never can get our pictures in the Sunday papers because we shall never own one of those machines. But if we as citizens of this metropolis owned the trolleys it would be different. When the Green Avenue and Gompers square car goes by we would look at its brilliantly lit electric interior and smile with satisfaction. That is my new Wilmington, we'd say to our country cousins who were visiting us. Then we'd nod politely to the chauffeur, and he'd stop and take us aboard, and by and by the conductor would come through and hand us all a nickel!"

"What in thunder are you talking about? What on earth would the conductor hand you a nickel for?" demanded the lawyer.

"For riding on the car, of course," said the idiot. "That's the scheme, isn't it?"

"Oh, is it?" laughed the lawyer. "Well, I guess that's the way some people look at it. What is your precise idea of municipal ownership, anyhow?"

"Why," said the idiot, "as I understand the propaganda of the M. O. people as expounded on the editorial pages of the sporting extras of the New York Evening Tribune and the Chicago Daily William Randolph, municipal ownership means the grabbing of everything in sight that has a cash register and a meter attached to it, sending the original owners to jail for life and managing what's left for the benefit of the people. In the case of the trolleys all the enormous profits derived from the nefarious practice now in operation of carrying a passenger ninety miles for a nickel are to be

turned back to hol polloi in the shape of annual dividends with blue trading stamps with every dollar's worth, which on presentation at the office of any gas company in the United States will entitle the bearer to free gas for the rest of his natural life.

"The expected improvements in the public service will be along the betterment of cars, an increased urbanity on the part of the motormen and conductors and a far greater regard for beauty in all rapid transit matters. As I understand the situation as to the first improvements, the cars are to be larger to begin with, better ventilated and without straps. No car will be so small that anybody will ever have to stand in or out of rush hours. Each passenger will be provided with a Morris chair on a swivel, with a writing desk and an electric light attached, stationery and typewriters to be had on application to the conductor. At one end of each car there will be a Carnegie library and a reading room, with all the magazines and weeklies on file, and at the other a buffet where soft drinks will be dispensed by the best mixers the politicians can drum up. In the advertising panels that run around the walls of the car, instead of these being merely trices of patent medicines, face powders, breakfast foods and confections, elevating literature will be printed by such authors as Dicky Davis, Ella Wheeler Wilcox and Henry James, with a college graduate on the rear platform to explain the paragraphs of the last named author to those who do not understand reformed rhetoric. Ladies will be escorted to their seats by bellboys, and every car will have a chaplain, aided by a competent bouncer to see that attractive looking shoppers, dainty little widows and others of the female persuasion are able to travel a block without being ogled off the car by vagrom drummers and lads from the smoke regions lately come into possession of their fathers' hard-earned savings.

"All the motormen will be put through a course of instruction in good manners, so that when a lady on a street corner holds up her finger as a sign that she would like to get aboard, instead of cutting her dead, as many of them do at present, and going ahead as though the company didn't want any passengers, they will stop the car, lift their hats like a pack of Chesterfields, gather up her bundles, call her attention to the weather, express the hope that her family are all enjoying good health and see to it that she gets inside the car without falling on her face or sitting unexpectedly down in the lap of an entire stranger. The conductors will be similarly trained, only they will be rather better educated than the man on the front platform. I can think of no better way to show what the conductors will be than to say that they will resemble the modern policeman, that fine flower of the municipal ownership of the constabulary.

"You know what happens if you ask a policeman anything. He at once touches his helmet in respectful salutation, flicks the dust from the breast of his blue coat and places himself entirely at your service. Anything you want to know he tells you with a pleasant smile or with an expression of deep and poignant regret informs you that he is not at the moment in possession of the information you seek, but will find out at the earliest possible opportunity and send word by special delivery post if you will kindly give him your address. All of you who have had that experience with a policeman will know what to expect from the municipal ownership conductor. The city fathers as represented by their commissioner of trolleys will take the same care in the selection of the men that they now take through the police commissioner in the selection of the preservers of the peace, so that we may rest easy as to the superior morale of the force.

"Then, as for the roadbed, which is nowadays something of an eyesore in certain localities, the trolley commissioners will seek the co-operation of



MANNERS LIKE A CHESTERFIELD.

the commissioner of parks. Beautiful hedges of Japanese japonica will conceal the tracks from public gaze. At each street corner will be flower beds, in which the number of the street is set forth in growing plants. Trailing arbutus and Virginia creeper or wistaria vines will cover the trolley poles, and in time, when these have had a chance to grow, the whole trolley line will look like a beautiful floral and green arbor, and people living along the line, instead of looking out upon an ugly highway of steel and iron and wire, will gaze upon what appears to be a stretch of Eden running through their midst. Now, what could be better?"

"It seems perfectly lovely," said Mrs. Peabody, the idiot's landlady, enthusiastically. "Who's going to pay for all this?" asked Mr. Brief. "You people don't

seem to take the cost of these things into consideration."

"Who pays for the parks, the police, the fire department?" asked the idiot. "It will all come out of the pockets of the city, of course. All the city has to do is to establish a municipal printing establishment and publish a few bonds whenever the sinking fund gets below the water line. Say they need a hundred million to start with. That means only a hundred thousand bonds of a par value of \$1,000. Or they might get 'em out in smaller denominations of \$100 each, so that the people could buy them and thus put a lot of us in possession of a certificate of ownership. They'd look mighty pretty framed and hung on the wall. The best way to do, however, would be to send them over to England and sell 'em there, for it is an established fact that there is always somebody in England somewhere that will buy anything."

"That remains to be proved," said Mr. Brief.

"Well, all I have to say is that if you'll pay my expenses to London and back, guarantee me immunity from prosecution and provide me with the certificates I'll have Boston Common incorporated at \$1,000,000 tomorrow and sell the whole issue at 43 before the first day of next April," said the idiot. "I'll make the late G. Whittaker Wright look like 30 cents."

"That may be, but they'd prosecute you just the same. They landed Wright and they landed Hooley for very much the same sort of thing. And after awhile they'd do the same with the city if it put its privately printed bonds for municipal ownership of the trolley on the market," persisted Mr. Brief. "Can't you see that?"

"Yes," said the idiot. "But that's the biggest point for the municipality in the whole business. You can't send a whole city to jail, you know."

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

LOSS \$510,000 A WEEK.

Cost of Municipal Ownership to English Wage Earners.

During the years 1901-05 the rate of wages paid in Great Britain declined to such an extent that at the end of that period the workers were getting \$510,000 less a week than in 1900. The total loss in wages for the five years compared with the wage scale of 1900 was more than \$100,000,000. The parliamentary report from which these figures are taken records a reaction during the first half of last year, but the increase is but a bagatelle compared with the enormous loss recorded above.

As England is the country where government and municipal ownership is most general, these figures show that public ownership does not raise wages in general, but raises the wages of the few at the expense of the many.

This tremendous reduction in wages is due largely to increased taxation caused by the losses of the government and municipal industries, for higher taxes mean higher rents and a general increase in the cost of production, which must be offset in some way if England is to maintain her trade in the face of the world's competition. The easiest way to economize is to cut wages, and so the wage earner has had to pay for municipal experiments both in lower wages and higher rents.

When the wage earner is asked to vote for municipal ownership he should bear in mind that at the same time he would vote for all that goes with it—higher living expenses and lower wages, perhaps no wages at all. Who benefits? The politician who gets a new popular issue, the politician's close friends who are put on municipal jobs and the large consumer who gets his service for less than cost. Where does the wage earner come in? He pays the bills.

Philadelphia's Waterworks.
The Philadelphia Public Ledger predicts a general shakeup in the water department as the result of a recent inspection of the pumping stations. It states that evidence of neglect and inefficiency was found on every hand. This is not surprising in view of the fact that some of the "engineers" in charge of pumping stations were originally appointed as coal heavers and owe to political influence their promotion to their present responsible positions. The officials admit that the condition is serious, as much of the machinery is so worn as to be incapable of performing anything like its full duty. It is also admitted that much of the material received for repairs, etc., is defective and not in accordance with specifications. This condition has been known to members of the council for years.

Unfair Distribution of Cost.

A special dispatch from Kirkwood, Mo., to the Chicago Tribune states that the municipal electric light plant of that city has proved a failure. The generating plant will be shut down, and electricity will be purchased from a private company at one-third of what it has cost the city to make it. The city will sell to its customers at a price high enough to enable it to light the streets without cost to the taxpayers. This is typical of municipal ownership inequity—to force the users of electricity to pay for all the street lighting, although they are not benefited any more than the citizens who use gas or oil.

Failure of Municipal Bakeries.

The failure of the municipal bakeries at Catania, Italy, is reported by Mr. Churchill, the British consul at Palermo. There was a \$30,000 deficit in the balance sheet, and the request governing a loan of \$80,000 was refused by a royal commission. In consequence the institution has been closed.—United States Consular Reports.

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and a chance to pay for it out of your wages? If so I have a nice, new, up-to-date six room cottage situated in East Marion on East Bellville St. call on or address W. H. Clark or O. E. Gill Marion Ky.

AMONG OUR EXCHANGES

Dallas News. There are men who do nothing with both hands.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer. One way to lose faith in your fellow man is to take to endorsing notes for your friends.

Washington Post. There are now enough different kinds of grip germs at large to suit cases of all kinds. Don't shoot!

Baltimore Sun. The Atlantic City boardwalk is to be widened forty feet, perhaps to accommodate this season's Easter hats.

Exchange Railroad troubles everywhere. An Illinois man lost his mind, his hat, his voice and his religion hurrahing for a train that came in on time.

Atchison Globe. There is admitted into a great many homes every night, with a fire built especially for it in the parlor, some thing whose bond father would be afraid to go on down town.

Courier-Journal. The most beautiful girl in Iowa and the most beautiful one in Georgia have recently been married. A man once attempted to decide who was the prettiest girl in Kentucky, but his mind revolved so rapidly that it became overheated and he died miserably in a strait jacket.

"Regular as the Sun"

As an expression of aid to the cause of the blind and seeing of the sun is the "most regular" performance in the universe, unless it is the action of the liver and bowels when regulated with Dr. King's New Life Pills. Guaranteed by J. H. Orme, Dispenser, etc.

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Any little boy or girl under 12 years of age who will bring us ten yearly subscriptions to the PRESS and one new subscriber in the lot will be presented with a beautiful aquarium and a pair of gold fish, the value of which is \$2.50. This offer will hold good ten days only after this week closing January 31st.

Nothing will relieve indigestion that is not a thorough digestant. Kold Digests what you eat and allows the stomach to rest—regulates—gives strength again. It is a corrective of the highest efficiency. Sold by J. H. Orme.

Was Out.

"So you want my daughter, do you?" said the proprietor of the newspaper, to the young man who was sitting nervously on the edge of a chair in the parlor.

"Yes, sir."

"Have you spoken to her on the subject?"

"She's willing, sir, and referred me to you."

"But how do you know you love her?"

"How do I know?" gasped the young man. "I give you my word, sir, that I haven't eaten a square meal in two months and sleep is almost all of the question for thinking of her."

"Young man, there's some style to that talk. I think you may come into the family. I need a man of your ability to swear to the circulation of my paper."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

PARKER'S HAIR BALSAM

There are certain varieties of mountain plants which have a singular provision of nature for perpetuating their species. The duration of summer in those elevated regions is too short to permit of the ripening of seeds, and the top buds fall off and take root as would the seeds.

Plenty of Confidence.

Augustus Thomas, the well known playwright, was talking about first nights, and the heartrending anxiety of them.

"On my own first nights," he said, "I am a pitiable object, utterly without hope, convinced in advance that my play is bound to result in a failure."

"At such times I often wish I had the self-confidence that possessed Charles Remond. He, after he had dramatized his novel of 'Never Too Late to Mend,' wrote on the margin of a certain passage:

"If the audience fails to weep here, the passage has not been properly acted."

A Live Wire

Every nerve is a live wire connecting some part of the body with the brain. They are so numerous that if you penetrate the skin with the point of a needle you will touch a nerve and receive a shock—pain it is called. Aches and pains come from a pressure, strain or injury to a nerve; the more prominent the nerve the greater the pain. When the pain comes from a large nerve it is called

Neuralgia

whether it be the facial nerves, or the heart, stomach, sciatic or other prominent nerve branch. To stop pain, then, you must relieve the strain or pressure upon the nerves. Dr. Miles' Anti-Pain Pills do this.

I suffered intense pain, caused by neuralgia. I doctored and used various medicines without getting relief until I began taking Dr. Miles' Anti-Pain Pills. They did me more good than all the medicines I ever used. They never fail to cure my headaches, and they never leave any bad after-effects.

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King Solomon's Vase.

In the ancient cathedral of Genoa a vase of immense value has been preserved for 600 years. It is cut from a single emerald. Its principal diameter is 12 1/2 inches, and its height 5 1/2 inches. It is kept under several locks, the keys of which are in different hands, and it is rarely exhibited in public, then only by an order of the senate. When exhibited it is suspended round the neck of a priest by a cord, and no one is allowed to touch it but him. It is claimed that this vase is one of the gifts which was made to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba.

Joachim Miller, the "poet of the Sierax," called on the president and tried to interest him in a plan for a great world's fair for Washington in 1914.

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The Brigand in Sicily.

How strong is the influence of the brigand in Sicily is shown in recent proceedings at the Cattaniest assizes, where four of the band of the notorious Chief Palla Molino were to be tried. The jurymen and witnesses, instead of appearing, sent a joint petition to the court, praying to be excused so long as the chieftain, who has already a dozen assassinations to answer for, remains uncaptured.

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